

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1. (Currently amended) A guide catheter, comprising:

an outer sheath comprising an open lumen and a pre-shaped distal end;
an inner sheath comprising an open lumen, the inner sheath disposed within the open lumen of the outer sheath, the inner sheath axially rotatable and longitudinally translatable relative to the outer sheath, a distal end of the inner sheath conforming to a shape of the outer sheath when the inner sheath is retracted, and the distal end of the inner sheath assuming a pre-formed shape different from the shape of the outer sheath when the distal end of the inner sheath is extended beyond the distal end of the outer sheath;

a steering tendon disposed along the outer sheath, a distal end of the steering tendon connected to a distal tip of the outer sheath;

a guide handle connected to a proximal end of the outer sheath; and
a steering mechanism comprising a lever pivotably disposed on the guide handle, the steering mechanism connected to a proximal end of the steering tendon and providing a pulling force on the steering tendon in response to pivoting of the lever to adjustably change a shape of the pre-shaped distal end of the outer sheath; and

a retention mechanism provided on the guide handle to retain the steering lever at a fixed position.

2. (Previously presented) A guide catheter according to claim 1, wherein the lever of the steering mechanism comprises a steering handle.

3. (Original) A guide catheter according to claim 1, wherein the outer sheath further comprises at least one longitudinally disposed pre-stress line extending from the proximal end to the distal tip of the outer sheath.

4. (Original) A guide catheter according to claim 1, wherein the inner sheath further comprises at least one longitudinally disposed pre-stress line extending from a proximal end to a distal tip of the inner sheath.

5. (Original) A guide catheter according to claim 1, further comprising:
at least one electrode on the distal end of the inner sheath; and
at least one electrical conductor coupled to the at least one electrode, the at least one conductor disposed within the inner sheath.

6. (Original) A guide catheter according to claim 1, further comprising:
at least one electrode on the pre-shaped distal end of the outer sheath; and
at least one electrical conductor coupled to the at least one electrode, the at least one conductor disposed within the outer sheath.

7. (Original) A guide catheter according to claim 1, further comprising an occlusion device connected to the distal end of the inner sheath.

8. (Original) A guide catheter according to claim 1, further comprising an occlusion device connected to the pre-shaped distal end of the outer sheath.

9. (Original) A guide catheter according to claim 1, further comprising:
at least one pressure sensing device connected to the distal end of the inner sheath;
and
at least one electrical conductor coupled to the at least one pressure sensing device, the at least one conductor disposed within the inner sheath.

10. (Original) A guide catheter according to claim 1, further comprising:

at least one pressure sensing device connected to the pre-shaped distal end of the outer sheath; and

at least one electrical conductor coupled to the at least one pressure sensing device, the at least one conductor disposed within the outer sheath.

11. (Original) A guide catheter according to claim 1, wherein the pre-shaped distal end of the outer sheath further comprises:

a substantially straight section at the distal tip of the outer sheath having a length of about 1 cm to about 5 cm; and

a substantially circular curve proximally adjacent to the straight section, the circular curve having a bend radius ranging from about 0 degrees to about 180 degrees and a bend radius ranging from about 1 cm to about 7 cm.

12. (Original) A guide catheter according to claim 1, wherein the pre-formed shape of the distal end of the inner sheath further comprises:

a substantially straight section at the distal tip of the inner sheath having a length of about 0.5 cm to about 4.0 cm; and

a substantially circular curve proximally adjacent to the straight section, the circular curve having a bend radius ranging from about 0 degrees to about 150 degrees and a bend radius ranging from about 1 cm to about 5 cm.

13. (Original) A guide catheter according to claim 1, wherein the steering tendon is disposed on an outer surface of the outer sheath.

14. (Original) A guide catheter according to claim 1, wherein the steering tendon is disposed within the open lumen of the outer sheath.

15. (Original) A guide catheter according to claim 1, wherein the outer sheath further comprises a second lumen, the steering tendon disposed within the second lumen of the outer sheath.

16-23. (Cancelled).

24. (Currently amended) A guide catheter, comprising:

an outer sheath comprising an open lumen and a pre-shaped distal end;
an inner sheath comprising an open lumen configured to receive a payload, the inner sheath disposed within the open lumen of the outer sheath, the inner sheath rotatable and longitudinally displaceable relative to the outer sheath, a distal end of the inner sheath conforming to a shape of the outer sheath when the inner sheath is retracted, and the distal end of the inner sheath assuming a pre-formed shape different from the shape of the outer sheath when the distal end of the inner sheath is extended beyond the distal end of the outer sheath;

a steering member disposed along the outer sheath, a distal end of the steering member connected to a distal tip of the outer sheath;

a guide handle connected to a proximal end of the outer sheath; and
a steering mechanism comprising a lever pivotably disposed on the guide handle, the steering mechanism connected to a proximal end of the steering tendon and from which a pulling force is developed on the steering tendon in response to pivoting of the lever to adjustably change a shape of the pre-shaped distal end of the outer sheath; and

a retention mechanism provided on the guide handle to retain the steering lever at a fixed position.

25. (Previously presented) The guide catheter of claim 24, wherein the payload comprises a cardiac lead.

26. (Previously presented) The guide catheter of claim 24, wherein the payload comprises a cardiac lead configured for implantation with a coronary sinus or a branch vessel of the coronary sinus.

27. (Previously presented) The guide catheter of claim 24, wherein the payload comprises a pacing lead.

28. (Previously presented) The guide catheter of claim 24, wherein the payload comprises a defibrillation lead.

29. (Previously presented) The guide catheter of claim 24, wherein the payload comprises an injectable media.

30. (Previously presented) The guide catheter of claim 24, wherein the payload comprises a guide wire.

31. (Previously presented) The guide catheter of claim 24, wherein the payload comprises a guide wire and a cardiac lead having a lumen dimensioned to receive the guide wire, the lumen of the cardiac lead dimensioned to permit displacement of the cardiac lead over the guide wire.

32. (Previously presented) The guide catheter of claim 24, wherein the outer sheath further comprises at least one longitudinally disposed pre-stress line extending from the proximal end to the distal tip of the outer sheath.

33. (Previously presented) The guide catheter of claim 24, wherein the inner sheath further comprises at least one longitudinally disposed pre-stress line extending from a proximal end to a distal tip of the inner sheath.

34. (Previously presented) The guide catheter of claim 24, further comprising:
at least one electrode on the distal end of the inner sheath; and
at least one electrical conductor coupled to the at least one electrode, the at least one conductor disposed within the inner sheath.

35. (Previously presented) The guide catheter of claim 24, further comprising:
at least one electrode on the pre-shaped distal end of the outer sheath; and
at least one electrical conductor coupled to the at least one electrode, the at least one conductor disposed within the outer sheath.

36. (Previously presented) The guide catheter of claim 24, further comprising an occlusion device connected to the distal end of the inner sheath.

37. (Previously presented) The guide catheter of claim 24, further comprising an occlusion device connected to the pre-shaped distal end of the outer sheath.

38. (Previously presented) The guide catheter of claim 24, further comprising:
at least one pressure sensing device connected to the distal end of the inner sheath;
and
at least one electrical conductor coupled to the at least one pressure sensing device, the at least one conductor disposed within the inner sheath.

39. (Previously presented) The guide catheter of claim 24, further comprising:
at least one pressure sensing device connected to the pre-shaped distal end of the outer sheath; and
at least one electrical conductor coupled to the at least one pressure sensing device, the at least one conductor disposed within the outer sheath.

40. (Previously presented) The guide catheter of claim 24, wherein:

the pre-shaped distal end of the outer sheath further comprises:

a substantially straight section at the distal tip of the outer sheath having a length of about 1 cm to about 5 cm; and

a substantially circular curve proximally adjacent to the straight section, the circular curve having a bend radius ranging from about 0 degrees to about 180 degrees and a bend radius ranging from about 1 cm to about 7 cm; and

the pre-formed shape of the distal end of the inner sheath further comprises:

a substantially straight section at the distal tip of the inner sheath having a length of about 0.5 cm to about 4.0 cm; and

a substantially circular curve proximally adjacent to the straight section, the circular curve having a bend radius ranging from about 0 degrees to about 150 degrees and a bend radius ranging from about 1 cm to about 5 cm.

41. (Previously presented) The guide catheter of claim 24, wherein the steering tendon is disposed on an outer surface of the outer sheath or within the open lumen of the outer sheath.

42. (Previously presented) The guide catheter of claim 24, wherein the outer sheath further comprises a second lumen, the steering tendon disposed within the second lumen of the outer sheath.

43. (Canceled).

44. (Currently amended) The guide catheter according to claim 43 1, wherein the retention mechanism comprises a locking arrangement configured to lock the steering handle lever at the fixed position.

45. (Currently amended) The guide catheter according to claim 43 1, wherein the retention mechanism comprises an arrangement configured to frictionally retain the steering handle lever at the fixed position.

46. (Previously presented) The guide catheter according to claim 1, wherein the guide handle comprises at least one longitudinally disposed pre-stress line to facilitate separation of the guide handle in at least two sections.

47. (Previously presented) The guide catheter according to claim 46, wherein the guide handle comprises separation grips configured to facilitate separation of the guide handle in the at least two sections.

48. (Previously presented) The guide catheter according to claim 1, wherein:

the outer sheath further comprises at least one longitudinally disposed pre-stress line extending from the proximal end to the distal tip of the outer sheath; and

the guide handle comprises at least one longitudinally disposed pre-stress line to facilitate separation of the guide handle in at least two sections, wherein separation of the guide handle facilitates initiation of separation of the outer sheath.

49. (Canceled).

50. (Currently amended) The guide catheter according to claim 49 24, wherein the retention mechanism comprises a locking arrangement configured to lock the steering handle lever at the fixed position.

51. (Currently amended) The guide catheter according to claim 49 24, wherein the retention mechanism comprises an arrangement configured to frictionally retain the steering handle lever at the fixed position.

52. (Previously presented) The guide catheter according to claim 24, wherein the guide handle comprises at least one longitudinally disposed pre-stress line to facilitate separation of the guide handle in at least two sections.

53. (Previously presented) The guide catheter according to claim 52, wherein the guide handle comprises separation grips configured to facilitate separation of the guide handle in the at least two sections.

54. (Previously presented) The guide catheter according to claim 24, wherein:

- the outer sheath further comprises at least one longitudinally disposed pre-stress line extending from the proximal end to the distal tip of the outer sheath; and
- the guide handle comprises at least one longitudinally disposed pre-stress line to facilitate separation of the guide handle in at least two sections, wherein separation of the guide handle facilitates initiation of separation of the outer sheath.